



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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GOVERNOR

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**DOH ADVISORY ON FLOODED AREAS AND GENERAL
PRECAUTIONS FOR STANDING WATERS**

HONOLULU – The Hawaii State Department of Health is advising the public to stay out of streams, coastal, and standing waters that are contaminated by storm water (usually brown or murky in color). Storm water may contain harmful micro-organisms (pathogens) from overflowing cesspools or septic tanks as well as animal feces washed into streams and storm drains.

Excessive storm water may also contain sewage from overflowing manholes and overwhelmed treatment facilities or chemicals from polluted runoff from commercial and industrial facilities. Kailua and Kaneohe Beaches have been posted. Areas with known sewage overflows are being posted. People should use caution if the water is brown or murky, regardless of whether warning signs are posted.

The cause of spills is due to heavy rains and flooding and not to failures of sewer pipes or facilities. "There is too much storm water getting into the sewer lines and we strongly urge people not to drain their flooded property by opening the sewer clean out," said Laurence Lau, Deputy Director for Environmental Health. "The public is also reminded that it is illegal to attach rain gutters to sewer lines and anyone aware of this activity in their area should report it immediately to the City and County."

The Department of Health and the counties monitor water quality and spills. Warning signs will be posted at beaches and streams if contaminants from treatment facilities reach those waters or when otherwise appropriate.

On Oahu, sewage or chemical spills should be reported to the City and County at 523-4423. Questions regarding the safety of standing water, "brown water" in coastal and inland areas, or beach closures should be directed to the Department of Health Clean Water Branch on Oahu at 586-4309.

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